protested against the Anti-India broadcasting by US media in regard to elections in Jammu & Kashmir;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to avoid such situation in future?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) and (b). Reporting on US radio and television on elections in Jammu & Kashmir was not substantial. The main commercial networks did not cover the elections in J&K at all. CNN telecast a news item on May 30, 1996 which carried some criticism. There were also some misleading reports on the subject in the US print media of May 24, 1996.

The main thrust of the criticism was that the people in Kashmir had been coerced to vote by security forces, so that the turn out could be high.

(c) Government have comprehensively refuted these false allegations in numerous briefings in Srinagar and New Delhi as well as through Indian Embassies. The Indian Embassy in Washington issued a detailed press briefing the US media following the misleading reports which appeared on May 24, 1996. Editors of leading newspapers and news agencies were also personally briefed by the Embassy.

(d) Government will continue with its policy of transparency in J&K as the most effective method of ensuring that interested observers are able to see the reality on the ground for themselves and report the correct situation to their audiences.

Setting up of Youth Hostels and Holiday Camps

1262. SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) the number of youth hostels and holiday camps set up in the country so far alongwith the facilities being provided to the youths at these places, State-wise;

(b) whether the Government allow the retired Government employees to avail of the same facilities which are being provided to the regular Government servants;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether the Government propose to extend these facilities to Ex-Government servants also?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI DHANUSHKODI ATHITHANR) : (a) The following 45 youth hostels have been commissioned. Panchkula, Pipli, Bhiwani (Haryana); Dalhousie, Bilaspur (Himachal Pradesh); Ropar, Amritsar, Sangrur (Punjab); Jaipur, Jodhpur (Rajasthan); Nainital, Agra (Uttar Pradesh); Sacunderabad, Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh); Hassan, Mysore (Karnataka); Calicut, Ernakulam, Veli (Kerala); Madras, Thanjavur, Madurai, Tiruchirapalli (Tamil Nadu); Panaji (Goa); Gandhinagar (Gujarat); Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh); Aurangabad (Maharashtra); Naharlagun (Arunachal Pradesh); Shillong, Tura (Meghalaya); Patnitop (Jammu & Kashmir); Patna (Bihar); Puri, Joshipur (Orissa); Darjeeling (West Bengal); Golaghat, Guwahati (Assam); Imphal, Ukhrul (Manipur); Tripura (Agartala); Dimapur (Nagaland); Aizawl (Mizoram); Port Blair (Andaman & Nicobar Island); Pondicherry (Pondicherry); Namchi (Sikkim);

These Youth Hostels are non-religious, non-political and non-commercial Units without any discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, caste, careed or social background. Overnight charges are kept to the minimum so that the youth with limited means can avail the stay facilities. Concession in overnight charges is given to members of Youth Hostel Association and students in organised groups of educational Institutions. It promotes youth travel by providing inexpensive hostel facilities to young persons on their educational excursions to historical and cultural centres intended to foster feelings of better understanding of each others, gain knowledge about diversities of the country, its natural beauty and historical heritage. The Department of Tourism, Government of India have, however, not set up any holiday camps.

(b) Youth hostels are primarily meant for short stay of travellers, especially youth, irrespective of their status.

(c) & (d). Does not arise.

Patent Right

1263. SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the US based Fox Chase Cancer Centre has applied to European patent Office for right over phylanthus Niruri popularly known in India as "bhuin amla" which is used by Ayurvedic and unani doctors for curing jaundice; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) and (b). US based Fox chase Cancer Centre has filed a patent in Europe for treating hepatitis virus by administering a component of phylanthus Niruri popularly known as "Bhumi Amla" used by Ayurvedic and Unani doctors for various ailments including Liver disorders.